

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NEA-10 PRS-01 USIA-06 L-03
DHA-02 /082 W

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P R 010003Z JUN 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3825
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1723

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, US

SUBJ: SWEDEN'S AMBASSADOR THUNBORG CALLS ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG

REF: USUN 1672

1. SUMMARY: SWEDEN'S AMBASSADOR THUNBORG CALLED ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG AT 1:00 PM MAY 31 TO DISCUSS YOUNG'S REPORTED REMARKS ABOUT RACISM IN SWEDEN (REFTEL). DURING CORDIAL MEETING WITH THUNBORG, YOUNG SAID HE HAD COMMENTED INFORMALLY TO THE REPORTERS ABOARD THE AIRPLANE THAT RACE AND CULTURE HAD THEIR IMPACT ON HUMAN RELATIONS IN ALL PLACES. HE HAD NOT SINGLED OUT SWEDEN, HOWEVER, FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION. A REPORTER HAD ASKED IF SWEDEN WAS NOT EXEMPT FROM PROBLEMS OF RACISM. YOUNG HAD THEN REPLIED THAT NO ONE WAS EXEMPT INCLUDING HIMSELF. DURING MEETING, THUNBORG EMPHASIZED HIS GOVERNMENT'S INVITATION FOR YOUNG TO VISIT SWEDEN THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. YOUNG BEGAN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THUNBORG BY STRESSING THAT HE HAD NOT COMMENTED TO REPORTERS ABOUT SWEDEN IN A DISPARAGING VEIN. YOUNG SAID HE HAD BEEN UNDERLINING TO REPORTERS IN AN ESSENTIALLY OFF-THE-RECORD, INFORMAL
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SESSION ABOARD THE AIRPLANE BOUND FROM KHARTOUM TO LONDON, THAT RACE AND CULTURE HAVE THEIR IMPACT ON HUMAN RELATIONS IN ALL PLACES. YOUNG HAD STRESSED THAT WE MUST ALL REALLY WORK AT LEARNING TO RELATE TO OTHERS. WHEN A REPORTER ASKED YOUNG IF SWEDEN WAS NOT EXEMPT FROM RACISM, YOUNG HAD REPLIED THAT NO ONE WAS EXEMPT INCLUDING HIMSELF. HE RECALLED SAYING TO THE REPORTERS, HOWEVER, THAT SWEDEN

HAD THE BEST OF RECORDS IN PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN RACIAL GROUPS.

3. THUNBORG TOOK FULL NOTE OF FACT THAT A REPORTER HAD RAISED SWEDEN NOT YOUNG. THUNBORG THEN UNDERLINED THAT SWEDEN'S LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT POLICY SUPPORTED EQUALITY FOR ALL. THUNBORG POINTED TO SWEDEN'S MEASURES TO ENSURE THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND GUEST WORKERS AS THOSE ENJOYED BY SWEDISH CITIZENS.

4. YOUNG STRESSED TO THUNBORG THAT THE QUESTION OF ETHNOCENTISM AND RACISM IS A COMPLICATED THING TO DISCUSS AND A THING WE DO NOT TALK ABOUT ENOUGH. HE COMMENTED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT IT WAS BASICALLY EASIER FOR THE BRITISH TO RELATE TO WHITE RHODESIANS AND BISHOP MUZOREWA THAN TO SOME OF ZIMBABWE'S MORE MILITANT FIGURES. YOUNG CAUTIONED THAT THERE WAS A DANGER IN TRYING TO INFLUENCE CHOICE OF LEADERS BECAUSE SUCH CHOICES COULD BACKFIRE. HE RECALLED THE INSTANCE OF IDI AMIN. YOUNG SAID HIS MEETING WITH ROBERT MUGABE HAD BEEN A REVELATION IN THAT MUGABE, RATHER THAN PRESENTING THE FIREBRAND POSTURE HE HAD IMAGINED, WAS MOST MODEST AND RESTRAINED. YOUNG ADDED THAT MUGABE IMPRESSED HIM AS INTELLECTUALLY MORE CULTIVATED THAN MUZOREWA.

5. THUNBORG TURNED TO YOUNG'S REPORTED REMARKS THAT "THE ISRAELIS LEAD THE WORLD IN TRYING ANALYTICALLY TO PUT A VARIETY OF CULTURES TOGETHER." THUNBORG CONSIDERED THAT ISRAEL HAD SHORTCOMINGS IN THE AREA OF RACE RELATIONS. YOUNG EXPLAINED

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THAT HE HAD TOLD THE REPORTERS THAT ISRAEL EARLY ON HAD RECOGNIZED THAT IT HAD SERIOUS PROBLEMS AMONG ITS RACIAL GROUPS AND, THEREFORE, HAD PUT SOME OF ITS BEST-QUALIFIED MINDS TO WORK IN TRYING TO RESOLVE MATTERS. HE HAD NOT INTENDED TO IMPLY THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD SOLVED EVERYTHING, BUT RATHER THAT THEY WERE STRUGGLING TO RESOLVE MATTERS.

6. THUNBORG EMPHASIZED THAT HIS CALL WAS NOT TO LODGE A PROTEST. HE UNDERLINED THAT YOUNG HAD DONE A "MARVELOUS" JOB AT MAPUTO.

7. YOUNG REPLIED THAT SWEDEN'S RECORD ON QUESTIONS OF RACISM COULD NOT BE TOPPED IN TERMS OF OUTLOOK. THUNBORG AND YOUNG THEN RECALLED YOUNG'S VISIT TO SWEDEN IN 1964 WITH MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE DRIVE AT THAT TIME BY SWEDISH TRADE UNIONS, CHURCHES, AND OTHER SOCIAL GROUPS TO RAISE MONEY IN SUPPORT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING'S CAMPAIGN.

8. YOUNG COMMENTED THAT THE PROBLEM IN HIS EXCHANGE WITH THE REPORTERS HAD BEEN THAT HE HAD BEEN TACKLING AN ESSENTIALLY THEOLOGICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL PROBLEM. THUNBORG REPLIED THAT, WHILE A SWEDISH UNIVERSITY WOULD WELCOME WITH OPEN ARMS A BLACK STUDENT FROM THE US, A LANDLADY OR LANDLORD IN SWEDEN MIGHT FIND EXCUSES FOR NOT RENTING A ROOM TO THIS STUDENT. WERE THE SUBJECT TO BE AIDED PUBLICLY, THE LANDLORD OR LANDLADY WOULD DENY ANY RACIST FEELINGS AND FABRICATE OTHER REASONS FOR HAVING DONE SO. THUNBORG REFLECTED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE IN SWEDEN WHOSE DIRECT EXPOSURE TO PEOPLES OF OTHER RACES WAS VERY SLIGHT OR NON-EXISTENT. YOUNG AGREED THAT LACK OF PRIOR CONTACT WITH OTHER GROUPS COULD PRESENT AN INITIAL BLOCK. HE CITED A NUMBER OF INSTANCES FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE TO SUPPORT THIS.

9. THUNBORG SAID SWEDEN'S PRESS REMAINED MUCH INTERESTED
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IN YOUNG'S REPORTED REMARKS, HE EXPECTED TO BE MEETING REPRESENTATIVES OF THAT PRESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS MEETING WITH YOUNG. THUNBORG PLANNED TO COMMENT THAT HE AND YOUNG HAD A VERY FRIENDLY CONVERSATION; THAT YOUNG IN HIS MEETING WITH THE REPORTERS HAD NOT SINGLED OUT SWEDEN FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION; AND THAT YOUNG HAS AN INVITATION TO VISIT SWEDEN. YOUNG SUGGESTED THAT THUNBORG MIGHT ALSO REFLECT YOUNG'S VIEW THAT SWEDEN'S GOVERNMENT POLICY AS WELL AS ITS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS WERE OUTSTANDING IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RELATIONS. YOUNG CONTINUED THAT IN A WAY HE HAD BEEN HOPING THAT A DIALOGUE ON RACISM AND ETHNO-CENTRISM WOULD KEEP UP. HE TOLD THUNBORG THAT IF THE "DAGENS NYHETER" CORRESPONDENT WISHED TO GIVE HIM A CALL, THAT WOULD BE FINE.

10. THUNBORG ASKED YOUNG WHEN HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO VISIT SWEDEN. YOUNG SUGGESTED JULY WHEN HE EXPECTED TO BE IN EUROPE. THUNBORG ADDED THAT SWEDEN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SODER WOULD BE IN NEW YORK JUNE 27-29 AND SHE HOPED TO MEET YOUNG. YOUNG SAID HE GREATLY LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS ON JUNE 28 OR 29, IF HE IS IN NEW YORK.
YOUNG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1996428
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SWEDEN\ S AMBASSADOR THUNBORG CALLS ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, SHUM, SW, US, UN, (YOUNG, ANDREW J), (THUNBORG, ANDERS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
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